

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE AL CORNELLA
CHAIRMAN
OVERSEAS BASING COMMISSION
REGARDING THE COMMISSION REPORT**

(NOTE: This will be the only statement from the Commission regarding its report until a news conference to be held Monday, May 9, 2005 at 10 a.m. in the Zenger Room at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.)

The global basing realignment currently being implemented by the Department of Defense (DOD) is important to our nation and necessary. The Commission understands the need for change and endorses many of the initiatives contained in the Department's Integrated Global Posture and Basing Strategy (IGPBS).

However, the plan can be improved.

Our review leads us to conclude that the timing and synchronization of such a massive realignment of forces, in conjunction with major DOD transformation initiatives, the replenishment of supplies and equipment consumed in Iraq and Afghanistan, ongoing strategic studies such as the Quadrennial Defense Review and Mobility Capabilities Study, the negotiations with allies and friends on the movement of our forces, and the Base Realignment and Closure process, among others, requires that the proposed pace of events for our overseas basing posture be slowed and re-ordered. Such a step is of paramount importance in addressing quality of life issues for 70,000 returning American military personnel plus their families. Schools, health care and housing need to be in place at domestic receiving bases on the first day troops and their families arrive home.

The Commission also believes the IGPBS involves national security matters that go beyond the Department of Defense. The interagency process has not been fully used in the development of the Department's plan. The placement of our forces abroad has many tendrils into other elements of national power such as diplomacy, intelligence, foreign aid, covert action, energy, law enforcement, economic policy, homeland defense and others. As a nation, we need to achieve unity of purpose and effort among all relevant agencies regarding where we place our forces abroad to protect the overall security of the United States.

The Commission notes there has been almost no public discussion of this multi-billion dollar process that affects the security of every American. We urge Congress to vigorously engage on this issue to ensure that full disclosure of the alternatives, risks and costs are made.